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Initiation of the work of the United Nations Forum on Forests with the Collaborative Partnership on Forests

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Note by the Secretariat

Summary

The present note describes the mandate, role and objectives of the recently established Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF). It also gives information on the decision-making systems of various CPF members, as they are autonomous organizations with their own governing bodies and mandates. The note concludes by suggesting some specific tasks that the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) may wish to invite CPF to undertake, in support of the work of UNFF.

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Introduction

1. The present note has been prepared in close collaboration with the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) to facilitate discussion under item 4 of the provisional agenda entitled "Initiation of the work of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) with the Collaborative Partnership on Forests"[1] at the first substantive session of UNFF. The objective of this note is to inform Governments and other stakeholders on the nature of the CPF arrangement, the functioning of the governing bodies of its member organizations, and the decision-making process regarding their programmes. The note also outlines types of interface between UNFF and CPF, as well as the ways in which UNFF could guide CPF.[2] Finally, the note proposes tasks that UNFF at its first substantive session may wish to request CPF to undertake in support of the work of UNFF.

I. Establishment of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF)

A. Mandate of CPF

2. In its resolution 2000/35 of 18 October 2000 on an international arrangement on forests, the Economic and Social Council, in addition to establishing UNFF, decided to invite the executive heads of relevant organizations of the United Nations system and heads of other relevant international and regional organizations, institutions and instruments to form a collaborative partnership on forests to support the work of UNFF and to enhance cooperation and coordination among participants, and to call upon their governing bodies and their heads to support the activities of the collaborative partnership on forests to achieve the goals of UNFF (para. 3 (b)).

3. In the same resolution, the Economic and Social Council also recommended that the collaborative partnership on forests build on a high-level, informal group, such as the Inter-Agency Task Force on Forests (ITFF), which would receive guidance from UNFF; facilitate and promote coordinated and cooperative action, including joint programming and submissions of coordinated proposals to their respective governing bodies; and facilitate donor coordination. Such a partnership would submit coordinated inputs and progress reports to the UNFF, operate in an open, transparent and flexible manner, and undertake periodic reviews of its effectiveness (para. 8).

B. The Inter-Agency Task Force on Forests (ITFF) as foundation for CPF

4. The informal, high-level Inter-Agency Task Force on Forests (ITFF) was established in 1995 to support the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) (1995-1997) and, subsequently, the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) (1997-2000). ITFF supported the IPF/IFF process by contributing to the preparation of the reports of the Secretary-General on various IPF/IFF programme elements as well as by implementing IPF/IFF proposal for action. It consisted of the following eight international forest-related organizations:

- Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity;[3]
- Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR);
- Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat;
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);
- International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO);
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP);
- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP);
- World Bank.

C. Establishment and role of CPF

5. In response to the Economic and Social Council's recommendation and based on the six-year working experience of the ITFF partnership, ITFF initiated the formation of CPF among the eight ITFF members at its meeting on 11 February 2001 in New York.[4] Subsequently, CPF was formally established in its first meeting on 4 and 5 April 2001 in Rome. The CPF membership is expected to expand to include a total of about a dozen international forest-related

organizations, institutions and instruments that have the capacity, programmes and substantive resources to facilitate the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action.

6. CPF will support the work of UNFF in the promotion of the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests and in the strengthening of political commitment to this end.

7. The principle objectives of CPF in support of UNFF are to:

(a) Support the deliberations of the UNFF;

(b) Enhance cooperation and coordination among the members;

(c) Strengthen political commitment to sustainable forest management;

(d) Facilitate the implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action, particularly through the UNFF plan of action;[5]

(e) Assist UNFF in monitoring and reporting on the progress towards attaining the UNFF's objectives, particularly on the progress in the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action.[6]

8. The operational work of CPF will concentrate on contributing to the development and implementation of the UNFF plan of action, as well as on the monitoring of progress. The CPF members will continue, within the framework of their mandates, resources and competence, to implement and support the national implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action, through their current and future programmes and joint programmes, projects and other activities. Although the major responsibility for sustainable forest management lies with countries, CPF has a crucial advisory and facilitator role in support of the national implementation. The CPF activities would aim, in particular, at mobilizing technical and financial resources as well as catalysing supporting activities. CPF has reiterated its willingness to contribute to the development and, in particular, the implementation of the UNFF plan of action. It has also agreed to develop and execute a concrete and coordinated approach to this end.

9. CPF will also assist UNFF in the development of a system on monitoring, assessment and reporting on progress towards attaining UNFF's objectives. CPF would, in particular, assist the UNFF in developing a reporting system on progress in the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action, as well as in the overall assessment of the progress.

10. The CPF members will need to enhance their complementarities and strive for better coordination and greater coherence of action, as well as to focus their collective activities and programmes to support policies, strategies and actions promoted by UNFF. There is a need, in particular, to encourage joint programming among CPF members based on identification of priority issues that are most in need of synergy and joint action.

D. Lead agency system and collaboration with other organizations

11. The CPF members will adopt a lead agency system similar to that of ITFF. The lead agency would take responsibility to lead, in accordance with its mandate, available resources, competence and comparative advantage, one or more relevant programme elements of the UNFF multi-year programme of work[7] and programmatic component(s) of the UNFF plan of action. This is, in particular, to implement specific IPF/IFF proposals for action; to support the national implementation; and to provide expertise and other support to facilitate the UNFF deliberations. The challenge is to further strengthen the partnerships and establish new modalities of cooperation both among the CPF members and between the CPF and other partners so as to make the best use of all the available forest-related institutional capabilities.[8] Therefore, a crucial role of the lead agency would be to strengthen coordinated activities among the relevant CPF members as well as other partners in order to maximize synergies; to mobilize the best possible resources and expertise; and to avoid overlaps in the work of the CPF member organizations.

12. The CPF will operate in an open, transparent and flexible manner. Other relevant and interested international and regional organizations, institutions and instruments that are not members of CPF, including non-governmental organizations, private sector entities and other major groups, will be invited to contribute to specific activities of CPF, for example, certain projects, programmes, expert meetings and other activities, where their competencies would enrich the thematic work of CPF in the implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action.

13. To facilitate an interactive interface between CPF and other collaborators, CPF has agreed to establish a CPF Network that would be open to the participation of a wide range of these international and regional organizations, institutions and instruments.

II. Governing bodies of the CPF organizations and their decision-making systems

14. The establishment of CPF, as a new international partnership on forests, represents the willingness and commitment of the CPF member organizations to cooperate on policy implementation, and to jointly support the work of UNFF. Decisions made in the governing bodies of the CPF member organizations determine their role and activities in support of UNFF. The decision-making systems of the governing bodies of the CPF members vary considerably in terms of their membership, main functions, governing meetings, subsidiary bodies (such as committees), funding mechanisms and means to allocate funds for their programme activities.

15. Each organization's resources for the administration and implementation of their programmes are derived from distinct sources, such as:

- Regular budgets: funded by the member States from assessed contributions and whose appropriations for various departments are determined by the administrative body of the organization;
- Voluntary funds: funds to provide additional financing for specific programmes of the organization guided by the decision of its governing body;
- Trust funds: extrabudgetary funds for programmes that complement or supplement activities of the organization, usually decided upon by the management of the organization. Such funds are usually agreed to and negotiated between the organization and donors, and form separate accounts.

16. For more detailed information on the governing bodies of the CPF members and their decision-making systems categorized by organizations, see the annex.

III. Interface between the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) and CPF

A. Interaction between UNFF and CPF

17. CPF has been formed to support UNFF in achieving its objectives. UNFF would need, however, to have realistic expectations from CPF. The CPF member organizations would need to seek necessary financial and human resources in order to provide expertise and to carry out the specific tasks in support of the UNFF programme of work, in particular as related to implementation and monitoring of the UNFF plan of action. On the other hand, the CPF members can benefit from the support to UNFF, for example, through: increased financial and human resources; higher priority on forest programmes (in those organizations that deal also with issues other than forests); and improved coordination which would lead to minimizing overlaps in programming and to increased joint programming.

18. The various different ways for UNFF and CPF to interface are described directly below:

(a) UNFF can send recommendations to the governing bodies of CPF members, following the practice of IFF which called upon relevant governing bodies, for example, to identify practical means for mobilizing their diverse strengths and capabilities to support country-led efforts in implementing the proposals for action adopted by IPF; to foster synergies; and to clarify the respective roles and work to be carried out in the forest-related programmes of action of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and its follow-up;[9]

(b) In order to influence the work of the CPF member organizations in a way that reflects the priorities set by UNFF, the member States of UNFF would need to transmit consistent messages to the governing bodies of the CPF organizations. This requires enhanced information-sharing and coordination both within and among the countries that are members of the governing bodies. By the end of March 2001, the following governing bodies of the CPF member organizations had endorsed their support to UNFF and to CPF: the International Tropical Timber Council (ITTC), the Committee on Forestry of FAO, the Governing Council of UNEP, and the Board of

Trustees of CIFOR. The process of similar endorsements has also been initiated within the other CPF members;

(c) A very important mode for interface between UNFF and CPF will be the high-level ministerial segments which would include high-level dialogues between ministers and heads of the CPF organizations.[10] Such dialogues will provide a unique opportunity to further strengthen political commitment and to give guidance to the work of CPF;

(d) At each UNFF session, Governments and the CPF members would also have an opportunity to interact directly. CPF is expected to report on its activities to UNFF. This would provide an opportunity for Governments to seek information on the activities of the CPF members as well as to provide feedback and guidance to future activities of CPF. On the other hand, it would also provide an opportunity for CPF to inform Governments on the state of, and trends in, the world's forests and other forest-related issues, and give advice on the course of the policy deliberations, for example, by identifying emerging issues; informing UNFF on new findings and results of in-depth analyses; pointing out obstacles to implementation; and proposing solutions;

(e) Equally important is the dialogue between the CPF members and major groups during the multi-stakeholder dialogues in UNFF, as well as through the CPF networking.

B. Type of guidance to be provided by UNFF to CPF

19. UNFF's guidance to CPF could be at the:

- **Policy level**: UNFF could call upon Governments to provide guidance to the governing bodies of the CPF members, as well as send specific calls to governing bodies, inter alia, to encourage CPF to increase joint programming; and to continue to seek political support, as well as to have regular contacts with non-governmental organizations, private sector entities and other major groups;
- **Operational level**: UNFF could call upon CPF to support its work at three operational levels by: (a) focusing on activities related to specific programme elements of its multi-year programme of work; (b) supporting and facilitating the implementation of specific programmatic components of the UNFF plan of action; and (c) inviting CPF to carry out specific activities and studies on the themes that are under focus in a particular UNFF session, including emerging issues.

20. Overall, UNFF guidance to CPF would be intended to encourage, invite and call upon CPF and its members to undertake various activities in support of the work of UNFF. There are cases where such requests would need to be specifically reiterated in the governing bodies of the CPF member organizations.

C. Suggestions for specific tasks for CPF

21. UNFF might wish to consider inviting CPF to undertake the following tasks in support of UNFF:

(a) Further develop the UNFF plan of action, for adoption by UNFF;

(b) Continue to implement those IPF/IFF proposals for action that were specifically targeted to ITFF, for which the CPF has the main responsibility in respect of implementation;

(c) Assist countries and regions in implementation. UNFF could invite CPF to contribute to the implementation of the UNFF plan of action, and to present, at the second substantive session of UNFF, a concrete and coordinated approach on how to assist in the implementation;

(d) Assist UNFF in monitoring, assessment and reporting on progress towards the attainment of UNFF objectives, for example by:

- Carrying out a survey of the existing forest-related international information and data-collection and reporting systems;
- Undertaking activities towards harmonizing and streamlining national reporting requirements by the CPF member organizations on forest information, taking into account the streamlining work on reporting in other relevant forums;[11]
- Developing a proposal for the UNFF system for monitoring, assessment and reporting, including a proposal for a reporting format and guidelines for reporting on the progress in the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action according to

the programmatic components of the UNFF plan of action;

- Enhancing common understanding of forest concepts, terms, definitions;
- Reporting to UNFF on CPF's work, in particular on progress in implementing the UNFF plan of action;
- Reporting to UNFF on the state of the world's forests;
- Assisting UNFF in the assessment of the overall progress of the international arrangement on forests;

(e) Provide expertise and advisory services to UNFF, for example, in the form of specific surveys and in-depth analyses enjoying the respect of the scientific community that support policy decision-making.

IV. Conclusions

22. CPF, as a component of the international arrangement on forests, was established in April 2001 at its founding meeting in Rome, to support the work of UNFF. At present, it consists of eight member organizations (ITFF members). It will be strengthened, however, by a few other international forest-related organizations, institutions and instruments. The work of CPF will concentrate on contributing to the development and implementation of the UNFF plan of action, as well as on assisting UNFF in monitoring of progress. CPF will provide further information on its composition and activities at the first substantive session of UNFF.

23. The success of the international arrangement on forests is highly dependent on the support that will be provided by CPF to the work of UNFF, as well as on the support provided by UNFF member countries to CPF. The CPF members are all autonomous bodies with their own governing bodies, decision-making systems, and specific mandates, programmes and resources, which UNFF will need to take into account when providing guidance to CPF.

Notes

[1] See Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/35, para. 7 (b) (iii).

[2] Based on the report of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) on its fourth session (E/CN.17/2000/14, annex, sect. II.E) entitled "Forest-related work of international and regional organizations and under existing instruments".

[3] See United Nations Environment Programme, *Convention on Biological Diversity* (Environmental Law and Institution Programme Activity Centre), June 1992.

[4] Summary report of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Forests. Meeting held on 11 February 2001 in New York (http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/itffos-sum-feb01.pdf).

[5] See the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Towards the development of the United Nations Forum on Forests plan of action" (E/CN.18/2001/6).

[6] CPF will provide for the first substantive session of UNFF a concept paper on monitoring, assessment and reporting in UNFF.

[7] See the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Multi-year programme of work of the United Nations Forum on Forests" (E/CN.18/2001/5).

[8] See, further, the report of IFF on its fourth session (E/CN.17/2000/14), annex, para. 134.

[9] Ibid., para. 139.

[10] See Economic and Social Council resolution E/2000/35, para. 4 (j).

[11] For example, the work on the streamlining of reporting on multilateral environmental agreements within the Environmental Management Group (EMG), established by the General Assembly at its fifty-third session (resolution 53/242 of 28 July 1999), and chaired by the Executive Director of UNEP.

Annex

Information on the governing bodies of the current members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests

Inter-Agency Task Force on Forests (ITFF)	*Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)*	*Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)*	*Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat*	*Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)*	*International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO)*	*United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)*	*United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)*	*World Bank*
Main governing body	*Conference of the Parties*	*CIFOR Board of Trustees*	*Economic and Social Council*	*FAO Conference*	*International Tropical Timber Council (ITTC)*	*UNDP Executive Board*[a]	*Governing Council*	*Board of Governors*
Members of governing body	179 States plus the European Community (EC)	14 Board members (three-year term)[b]	54 members (three-year term)	180 States plus EC (three-year term)	56 members, including EC[b]	36 members (three-year term)	58 members (four-year term)	182 members
• **Africa**	Member parties: 52	Members: 3	Members: 14	African nations: 48 Council seats: 12 Near East nations: 21 Council seats: 6 Asian nations: 21 Council seats: 9	Council members Producers: 9 Consumer: 1	Executive Board: 8	Council members: 16	Members: 52
• **Asia and the Pacific**	Member parties: 47	Members: 3	Members: 11	South-west Pacific nations: 13 Council seats: 1	Council members Producers: 10 Consumers: 3	Executive Board: 7	Governing Council members: 13	Members: 49
• **Latin America and the Caribbean**	Member parties: 33	Members: 1	Members: 10	Latin American and Caribbean nations: 33 Council seats: 9	Council members Producers: 11	Executive Board: 5	Governing Council members: 10	Members: 32
• **Western European and other**	Member parties: 25, including EC	Members: 7	Members: 13	North American nations: 2 Council seats: 2	Council members Consumers: 22, including EC	Executive Board: 12	Governing Council members: 13	Members: 26
• **Eastern European**	Member parties: 23	Members: 0	Members: 6	European nations (including Eastern European): 41 Council seats: 10	Council members: 0	Executive Board: 4	Governing Council members: 6	Members: 23

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Frequency of main meetings	Conference of the Parties meets every two years; (six signatory countries have not yet ratified).	Board meets twice per year.	Economic and Social Council holds a five-week substantive session each year, New York/Geneva	FAO Conference meets every two years; decides policies and approves the budget.	ITTC meets twice per year.	Board meets three times per year for a total of up to five weeks, with provision for additional regular meetings.	Meets every two years.	Two meetings per year, held in Washington, D.C., headquarters, to reflect International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. Every third year, meetings are held in a member country.
Committees; commissions; subsidiary bodies	1. Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice 2. Panel of Experts on Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit-sharing 3. Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group on Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit-sharing 4. Ad hoc Open-ended inter-sessional Working Group on	Four committees: • Executive • Program • Finance/ Audit • Nominative	UNFF is one of the 10 functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council	FAO Council (49 member nations) meets three times per year. Acts as the executive organ and exercises power delegated to it by the Conference. Eight FAO Committees • Committee on Forestry is responsible for forests, and reports to the Council	Four committees: • Economic Information/ Market Intelligence • Reforestation and Forest Management • Forest Industry • Finance and Administration		High-level Committee of Ministers and Officials	World Bank policy focus: Forest Policy Review

Inter-Agency Task Force on Forests (ITFF)	*Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)*	*Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)*	*Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat*	*Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)*	*International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO)*	*United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)*	*United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)*	*World Bank*
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Committees; commissions; subsidiary bodies (continued)	Article 8 (j) and related provisions of the Convention 5. Ad hoc technical expert group on forest biological diversity							
Decision-making structure	Consensus in decision-making. Each member has one vote. Majority vote by the members present and voting.	CIFOR is established under the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) system, and has an independent Board of Trustees, which takes decisions by consensus	UNFF reports to the Economic and Social Council and through it to the General Assembly. Decisions are taken by a simple majority of members present and voting. Each member has one vote.	FAO takes one of three roles, to: • Implement its own programme; • Execute a programme on behalf of other agencies and international donors; or • Provide advice and management assistance to national projects.	Decisions and recommendations are based on consensus, or else ITTC takes decisions and makes recommendations by a simple distributed majority vote or, in some cases, a special vote.	Consensus in decision-making. In the case of voting, its rules and procedures, adopted in 1997, would be used.	The Council reports to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council. Each member has one vote. Majority required and following the expression "members present and voting".	Member countries are represented by the Board of Governors and a Washington, D.C.-based Board of Directors. Under IBRD[c] articles, to become member of the Bank a country must first join IMF. Membership in IDA,[d] IFC,[e] and MIGA[f] is conditional on membership in IBRD. Members are shareholders with ultimate decision-making power. The Governors, Finance or Planning Ministers meet annually at the fall meeting to decide on key Bank policy issues, admit or suspend country members, decide on changes in the

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Decision-making structure (continued)								authorized capital stock, determine the distribution of IBRD net income, and endorse financial statements and budgets.
Funding mechanism/ decisions on financial matters	Article 21 of the Convention on Biological Diversity provides for a mechanism for financial resources to developing country parties on a concessional or grant basis. Under the "Memorandum of Understanding", the Global Environment Facility (GEF) supports the Convention and the Clearing House Mechanism.	CIFOR's Board of Trustees approves the financial policies. Financial support and funds are based on donor support and derive from CGIAR member voluntary contributions. Funds from the CGIAR system are used to support all 16 international research centres.	Recommendations on financial and budgetary matters are taken by the Economic and Social Council and forwarded to the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly. Sources of funds include: regular budget of the United Nations; trust funds.	Financial policies and budgetary matters are determined by the Conference. Each member nation, upon approval of its application, pays as its first contribution a proportion of the budget, agreed to by the Conference, for the current financial period.	Decisions on financing are taken by simple majority vote. The Committee on Finance and Administration advises ITTC on administrative, budget and funding issues. The Bali Partnership Fund (BPF) fosters investments in sustainable forest products.	Financial resources are derived primarily from voluntary contributions of Governments of participating States. Recipient Governments are expected to pay the local costs of implementing projects in areas under their jurisdiction.	Environment Fund was created on the basis of voluntary contributions. Other sources of funds include: regular budget of the United Nations; trust funds; counterpart contributions.	The bulk of the Governors' power is delegated throughout the year by the Board of Executive Directors. Every member Government is represented by an Executive Director. These 24 Executive Directors meet twice a week to oversee the Bank's business, including approving loans and guarantees, new policies, the administrative budget, country assistance strategies, and borrowing the financial decisions.

[a] Executive Board of UNDP also functions as the Board of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).
[b] No geographical breakdown on the distribution of member seats.
[c] International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.
[d] International Development Association (covers the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative).
[e] International Finance Corporation (emphasizes private sector investments).
[f] Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency.